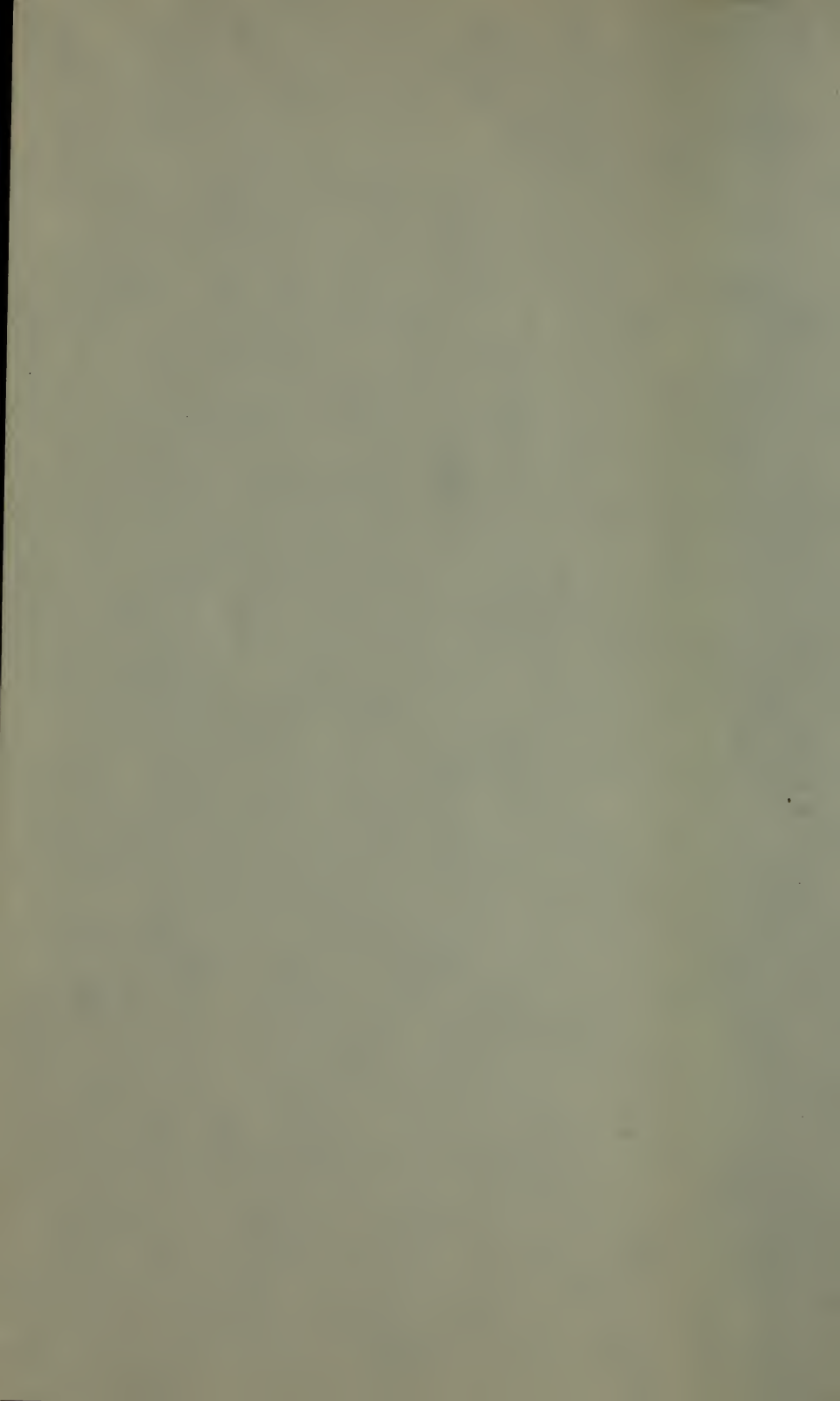


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DISCIPLINE AS A FACTOR

—IN THE—

WORK OF THE SCHOOL ROOM

—BY—
✓

JAMES PYLE WICKERSHAM

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Late Superintendent of Public Instruction, Pennsylvania



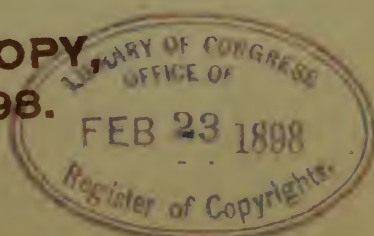
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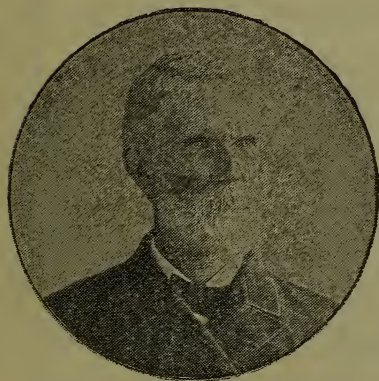
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INTRODUCTION



James Pyle Wickersham was born in Pennsylvania in 1825 and died in 1893. He began teaching at 16, and at 20 became principal of the Marietta academy, Pa. In 1854 he was elected first superintendent of schools in Lancaster county, at \$1500, the highest salary paid in the State; and in 1855 he opened a normal institute that in 1859 became the State normal school at Millersville. When the confederate army in 1863 entered Pennsylvania, he dismissed his school, started for the front,

and served seven weeks at the head of a regiment. He was principal until 1866, when he became State superintendent, which office he held for 14 years, during which period he was recognized as leading the progress the State made in education. He was officially editor of the *School Journal*; he was author of two pedagogical works of wide sale, "School Economy" and "Methods of Instruction": and his last work was a "History of Education in Pennsylvania" that will always be the standard authority.

This address of Dr. Wickersham was perhaps the best known and most widely influential of all his writings, and its publication in this form is in response to repeated request.

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Discipline as a Factor in the Work of the School Room

The work of a school may be roughly divided into two parts ; first, instruction, and second, discipline. Instruction as we are thinking of it, consists in imparting knowledge and in conducting those educational processes which produce intellectual strength and culture. Discipline in the sense now intended includes both those influences which secure order in a school-room and those forces which tend to awaken and develop the moral nature of the young. In the first, the teacher appears as the builder-

up of the mind, an instructor ; in the second, as an executive officer administering a system of government.

An end of school discipline is order ; but this is the least important of its ends, which comprehend in their fulness the high purposes of forming character and shaping life. The custom has been even among the teachers of wide reputation to look upon the discipline of the school rather as a means than as an end. Children in school, they hold, must be orderly or their studies will be interrupted and their progress in learning slow.

This view is partially correct, but in our conception it stops at the very beginning. A child attends school certainly not more to learn reading, writing, arithmetic, and other

branches of knowledge, than he does to receive proper moral training. Habits like those of order, obedience, industry, politeness, if they can be acquired at school, and great principles such as honor, honesty, truthfulness, justice, charity, if they can be implanted in the youthful mind, surely outweigh in educational value any amount of what is called learning.

As discipline in school well directed can do much to form moral habits and instil moral principles, it is not only the handmaid and helper of instruction, but has an end of its own quite independent of all others. Instruction seeks food for the intellect; discipline looks to the forces that control the feelings and the will. Instruc-

tion busies itself in storing the memory with facts, in furnishing the understanding with principles, and in conducting the imagination through fields of beauty ; discipline searches out motives, looks down into the human heart to find and master its springs of action, good or bad. Instruction is pleased with fine recitations, good examinations, and graduates that stand at the head of their class ; discipline demands conduct unexceptionable, character well formed, and a solid foundation of true manhood with which to go forth to meet the future. Instruction makes scholars ; discipline develops men.

In this broad sense I propose to speak of discipline as a factor in the work of the school, supposing that the subject is of pe-

culiar importance in this country at the present time.

As applied in the school-room, discipline assumes several different forms which admit of classification. There is a form which may be called the discipline of force; another, the discipline of tact; a third, the discipline of consequences; and a fourth, the discipline of conscience. They differ somewhat in aim, but materially in method. As a whole they cover the subject historically, if not philosophically, and light must be thrown upon the most delicate and difficult work of the school-room by their discussion.

1. *The discipline of force.* If in a school, order alone be aimed at, by far the easiest and most summary way of securing it is by means of force. With the authority he

possesses and his superior physical strength, a teacher can readily compel his pupils to sit motionless at their seats. They may not study, but they can be forced to remain still. Under such rule quiet will reign supreme. All disorderly conduct, all mischievous tricks, as well as all childish mirth and thoughtless noise, may be banished from the school-room. The deadening influence can be made to reach the play-ground, and all the exuberance of youthful spirit can be crushed out.

The school committees and school boards of the past, and a few who are not yet buried, are accustomed to consider ability to keep order in a school as the highest qualification of a teacher. Such as these want a man who can govern a school, master its rough

elements, whether he can teach it or not. Their ideal schoolmaster is one who possesses strength and courage, a kind of Hercules. Of that moral power which masters with a look, a shake of the head, or a word of admonition, whose very presence commands obedience, they have no conception. But in fact, to keep a school in order is the lightest of the teacher's tasks. A government of force is easily administered. A policeman with his club ought to be able to keep ten thousand children not only quiet but trembling; a teacher with a rod and ruler certainly should have no difficulty with fifty.

Still it must be acknowledged that a discipline of force is the time-sanctioned method of governing a school. The school in all ages, whenever and wherever described, re-

veals to us the rod, the ferule, the ruler, the strap, and other like implements for punishing refractory children. No historic records reach back beyond the time when some form of bodily torture was not resorted to in school to preserve order. The use of the rod was common in the schools of Greece and Rome, and the wise Solomon thought it essential to the right bringing up of children in Judea. An old schoolmaster in Swabia, in a service of fifty-three years, according to his own faithful statement, administered 911,500 canings, 121,000 floggings, 209,000 custodies, 10,200 ear-boxes, 22,700 tasks, 136 tips with the rule, 700 boys to stand on peas, 6,000 to kneel on sharp edged wood, 5,000 to wear the fool's cap, 1,700 to hold the rod—in all, 1,282,036 cases of punish-

ment. "Many a white and tender hand," says a writer in the *Spectator*, speaking of the Eton School, England, "which a fond mother had passionately kissed a thousand and a thousand times, have I seen whipped until it was covered with blood ; perhaps for smiling or for going a yard and a half out of the gate, or for writing an *o* for an *a* or an *a* for an *o*." In this country, whippings and other forms of corporal punishment have been in use almost universally as a means of school government ; and even now we hear of cases in which a teacher finds it necessary to use rod or ruler ten to twenty times a day.

Upon an investigation made recently by a school board in one of our most enlightened States, it was found that a teacher in their

employ was accustomed to whip his pupils for the following offences, as well as for those of a graver character: whispering, looking off the book, mis-spelling words, not standing in line, not folding arms, making faces, shuffling feet, and throwing paper balls.

It may as well be plainly said that this whole system of corporal punishment and bodily torture as it has been applied in the school-room is for the most part unnecessary, arbitrary, and demoralizing. Order can be secured by its means, but too often at the sacrifice of all that is best and noblest in the nature of a child. It marks a stage of darkness and barbarism in the art of bringing up children out of which we should have long since emerged. And yet the young

must be taught to obey—their welfare, their success in life, the well-being of society, depend upon it. A school can not be suffered to run riot. Order, obedience, respect for authority, are lessons much needed by the American people, and must be taught at all hazards in the family and in the school. If to “spare the rod” is to “spoil the child”, the rod should not be spared. Better a government of barbarism than no government at all.

But to the true teacher no such sad alternative is presented. He may hold in reserve a certain degree of force, but he seldom finds occasion to use it. His school is orderly, his pupils obey him; but it is through love, not fear. He finds the worst that is in the boys yield more readily to the softening in-

fluences of punishment. The discipline of force may be necessary to teachers who are less skilful or who move on a lower plane, but to him it seems ill-adapted to its purpose, and often brutalizing in its effect.

2. *The discipline of tact.* That is a discipline of tact which preserves order in a school-room and promotes a healthy moral growth among the pupils by nice management. In contrast with the kind of discipline just spoken of, it substitutes strategy for force.

A tidy school-room is a constant monitor. Order in arrangement of the furniture teaches in a most impressive way the lesson of order to the pupils. A world of school-room trouble may be avoided by nice management in seating the children ; in calling

out and dismissing classes ; in opening and closing school ; in hearing recitations, in giving help, and assigning lessons.

Plenty of work, right in quality and quantity, is a panacea for a multitude of school-room ills. The pent-up mischief of a school may be easily converted into the innocent sports of the play-ground.

Strict impartiality in his administration, on the part of the teacher, a well-balanced sense of justice, skill in his work, willingness to do his duty, and love for children, will in themselves render scoldings and whippings almost unnecessary. If in addition the teacher have that keen insight into human nature which enables him to see the coming evil in embryo before it breaks forth and to guard against it ; if he have that rare skill

which can discover and direct, when likely to go wrong, the currents of feeling that ebb and flow in the school-room and constitute its life, he will want little else to make him a happy monarch on a peaceful throne.

But a few examples of the tact which avoids the causes that render so many school-rooms scenes of disorder and hard feeling will serve to illustrate and impress the subject.

Two girls sit together in a school and are great friends. But their tongues are set loose, and they cannot resist the temptation to talk, and sometimes they talk loud. The teacher cautions them without effect. Shall he punish them? Thousands of children have been punished for a less offence. Bet-

ter far to separate them until they amend their ways.

A reading class is accustomed to read by turns from head to foot. Shrewdly counting the paragraphs ahead, and marking the place where they must begin reading, the boys at one end of the class talk and play tricks, while those at the other end are engaged in reading. I have seen a whole class punished for this kind of mischief. But how easily the evil is corrected by changing the method and calling upon each one promiscuously. The remedy will prove magical in its effects if the teacher is sure to call upon the first boy whose eyes leave the book.

A stubborn girl one day, when told to go to the blackboard and solve a problem, refused outright to do so. She had been ac-

customed to work her arithmetic on her slate at her seat, and was determined not to conform to this new method of recitation. A teacher without tact would have used force, committed a blunder, made an enemy. But her teacher, knowing her disposition, simply proceeded with the recitation as if nothing had happened and allowed her to keep her seat unnoticed. As the teacher well knew, she could not bear to be left alone—to be ignored, and by the time the next lesson was to be recited she was ready not only to go to the blackboard with the other members of the class, but to apologize to the teacher for her improper conduct.

At a certain academy in Pennsylvania, on Hallowe'en, a wagon belonging to the school was laboriously taken to pieces by some mis-

chievous students, carried to the roof of the building, and after being reconstructed was left astride the apex. Next morning, as may well be supposed, the wagon was the talk of the school and the neighborhood. Hundreds gazed up at the unusual object, and wondered how it could have been got up and how it could be brought down. A convulsion was expected at the morning opening exercises, but the principal looked even more good-natured than usual and said nothing.

But with that insight into character for which he was famous he quietly watched the actions of the students during the day, and by evening when the school again assembled he was confident he could name the parties who had taken the most prominent part in the trick that had created so much astonish-

ment. So he said in a pleasant way that some ingenious persons had placed his wagon on top of the house, and as he wanted to use it he would like to have help in getting it down. He was sure any of those present would lend a hand. But as a special committee, he would appoint A. B., C. D., E. F., G. H., I. J., naming those who he knew had been most active in the work of the night before.

A laugh rippled over the hall, followed by a cheer that nearly shook the building. The principal had a knowing look, but said nothing further. The boys named took off their coats and mounted the roof, and the wagon was soon in its old place under the shed without a break, and all was peace.

How admirable the management ! How effective the cure !

The principal of a boarding school in the State of Maryland was an adept in raising and fattening pigs as well as in training boys. One season he happened to have an exceedingly large and fine pig which he fed himself, and in looking at and admiring which he spent considerable time. On one of those occasions when the very air seems to breed mischief, the idea came into the heads of certain fun-loving boys among the students to dig a hole in the neighboring field and place the pig in it. How the thing was managed no one was told ; but when morning came the pen was empty, and some hundred yards away there was a hole in the ground five or six feet deep, with the professor's

favorite pig, dazed as much as a pig can be, at the bottom of it. The whole school visited and revisited the spot during the day, and the wonder continued to grow as to what would be done in the case.

When all were assembled in the evening, the professor remarked without the least show of anger that one of his pigs in whose physical growth and intellectual improvement he had taken considerable interest, had been placed by some envious or less-gifted persons at the bottom of a hole in a field near by, as most of them were aware; and he supposed the best thing to do, although he was sorry to do it, was to bury him there. He had therefore provided some shovels and would ask some of the strongest boys to assist him in the work. The shovels were

soon in the hands that had handled them before, and the whole school with some outside spectators were quickly drawn to the spot to witness the curious ceremony. The dirt was thrown in rapidly, and still more rapidly ; but to the astonishment of most of the lookers-on, the pig readily shook it off and trampled it under his feet. The hole was soon half-filled, but the pig was still erect and seemingly without any notion of being buried. In went the dirt faster and faster, but up went the pig with it until his white, fat back began to appear above the surface of the ground ; when the whole crowd, beginning to see the joke, broke into laughter and cheers, until the happy porker with a satisfied grunt stepped out on solid ground and marched triumphantly toward his custom-

ary sty, where the professor with face wreathed in smiles was already awaiting him with his evening meal.

Between the ordinary treatment of such cases and fine strategy like this, there is as great a contrast as there is between the rude pictures of a comic almanic and the divine creations of a Raphael or an Angelo. Even if the incidents mentioned did not happen just as related, they serve to illustrate the kind of school management which flanks difficulties that are too formidable to be attacked in front, which turns evil to good, which makes one principle of human nature serve as a checkmate to another, which governs by a finer, higher, more effective power than force—tact.

3. *The discipline of consequence.* As in

the moral government of the universe, punishment follows wrong-doing as a consequence, so the same principle may be applied in the government of the school. This is what is meant by the discipline of consequences. Without attempting to exhaust the subject or to define its exact limitations, it may be said that God's system of discipline as administered through the laws of nature provides, on one side, that punishment invariably follows wrong-doing ; that different degrees of wrong-doing are punished in proportion to their magnitude ; that different kinds of wrong-doing have different kinds of punishments ; and that all punishment is connected with wrong-doing as effect to cause : and, on the other side, that reward invariable follows right-doing ; that

different degrees of right-doing are rewarded in proportion to their merit ; that different kinds of right-doing have different kinds of reward ; and that reward is connected with right-doing as effect to cause.

It certainly cannot be necessary to enter into a lengthy argument to prove the general truth of these propositions. Here at least only brief mention can be made of the ground on which they rest.

We all know that we cannot do wrong without suffering punishment, and if we do right we will receive our reward. Some circumstances in our experience might lead us to question this conclusion, were it not that our reason tells us that a broader experience must verify it. Otherwise, the

moral universe would be a chaos and God himself would be unthroned.

If wrong-doing and right-doing are a matter of degrees, the principles of eternal justice require that punishments and rewards should be graded accordingly. Even human laws and human justice recognize and apply this principle.

A man morally bad may be physically strong, healthy, rich or prosperous. A pious missionary on his way to introduce Christianity into heathen lands may embark in a leaky ship and be buried in the sea, while pirates in a staunch one incur no danger. The young, the beautiful, the promising sometimes suffer and die, while many who become a curse to society are allowed to live on prospering in their evil ways. The plague

does not stop to spare the good man's house that lies in its dreadful path. And yet God is just, much that seems unjust being accounted for by the independent operation of the different kinds of natural laws. Physical laws have their own rewards and punishments ; so have moral laws. The former can be obeyed, and the latter can be violated, or the reverse.

All natural punishments and all natural rewards are the effects of causes to which they are linked by chains of adamant. When a physical law is broken the penalty must be paid ; obedience to such a law is sure to meet with its reward. If a man eat too much, he will get dyspepsia ; if he indulge too freely in strong drink, he will die a drunkard ; if he hold his hand to the fire,

it will burn ; if he jump from a house-top, he may break a limb or lose his life.

In the case of broken moral law, the consequences are different, but not less certain. The liar, the slanderer, the hypocrite, the thief, the murderer, in addition to the penalty they are apt to pay to violated human law, carry in their own bosoms the bitter sting that avenges their wrong-doing, or if too callous to feel it, that hardness is in itself the most terrible of punishments. The prodigal wastes his substance, and must live on husks ; the sluggard will not work, and “in harvest has nothing” ; the miser gloats over his gold until his soul shrivels up, and the hardened sinner converts his very heart to stone, and dies worse than a brute.

In principle, Nature’s discipline of conse-

quences may be introduced into the school-room. Bad conduct may be punished and good conduct rewarded after the manner of what occurs under the Divine order in the world about us. It would be easy at least to substitute for the arbitrary punishments that have disgraced school government in all ages, a system that would go far towards meting out to each offence a natural punishment properly adjusted to it in kind and degree.

What is to be thought of the moral effect of that kind of school discipline which whips a child or assigns him some disagreeable task for breaking a pane of glass, upsetting an inkstand, or coming late to school? Is the ruler or rod the proper punishment for a child who loses his book, misses his lesson, talks too loud, or pushes a school fellow off

the end of a bench ? Did you ever know an instance in which by any form of bodily torture a lazy boy was made industrious, a quarrelsome boy peaceable, a mean boy honorable, or a mischievous boy quiet and orderly ? The time has come for such a reform in school discipline as will free it from its arbitrary, illogical character and make it better accord with a sense of justice.

But to what extent can a discipline of consequences be applied in the school-room ? Is it possible at all in the little world called a school to link together as cause and effect, punishment and offence as is done in the great universe in which we live ?

The answer is best given by examples. For all injuries to the school property, the natural punishment is its repair. When a boy

has replaced the glass broken in a window, removed the cuts or stains from a defaced desk, repaired the palings knocked off from the yard fence, he has done about all that should be required of him. A pupil who has displaced the school furniture or cluttered the school-room floor, has paid the proper penalty when he has restored everything to its former condition.

A pupil who plays on his way to school, may be denied the privilege of playing at recess or noon-time. One who idles away his time, and therefore does not know his lessons, may be made to work while his schoolmates are at play in order to learn them. One who disturbs his school-fellows that sit near him, may be assigned a seat by himself. One who is quarrelsome, tyranni-

cal, or selfish on the playground, may be detained in the school-room at play-time or given a recess by himself.

The habit of using profane or vulgar language will be soon broken up, if the teacher require any one who indulges in it to remain apart from his school-fellows, lest his example contaminate them. He can say to one who has erred in this way: "You have used bad language and must remain in the school-room here with me while the other children play, for, of course, I cannot suffer innocent boys and girls to hear such words. I am sorry, but it cannot be helped." In the case of open disobedience to the teacher or incorrigibly bad conduct, it may be proper to resort to force, or to dismissal from school.

These examples do not cover all cases of

school discipline, nor does what has been said exhaust the treatment that may be proper in any one of those mentioned ; but as a whole they will serve to exemplify a kind of school discipline infinitely superior to that in use in hundreds of thousands of schools. It is rare indeed that a judicious administration of such a system will not secure order in a school, and what is more important, healthy moral growth among the pupils.

The advantages of a discipline of consequences over a system which involves arbitrary punishments such as whippings, tasks and bodily tortures, are beyond calculation. It is the rule of law in contrast with a rule of passion, caprice or blind volition.

Such a discipline enables the teacher to

remove in great measure his personality from his administration. Instead of a monarch governing according to his own will, he becomes a judge passing sentence according to law. He discards all personal feeling in punishing wrong-doers, but as the head of the school, simply sees to it that those who violate the law shall incur the natural consequences of their acts.

The discipline of force often leaves behind it a feeling of resentment. Some of us who were brought up under this old regime still feel the sting of the injustice done us; and it would not be difficult to awaken in our bosoms even now the spirit of revenge we once entertained towards masters who in their way were as arbitrary in their government and as tyrannical as Nero or Caligula.

A discipline that makes the government of the school impersonal could not be attended by any such bad results.

A discipline of consequences in school prepares the way for a discipline of consequences in life. When a child reaches the age of responsibility he finds himself hedged about by a complicated system of laws. Order must be preserved in society, the State must be governed, and to secure these ends laws must be enacted. To the violation of these laws are affixed penalties designed to be just and to grow naturally out of the offences. Among these penalties are restitution of property, fines, imprisonment, death. The whole system of jurisprudence is, as far as human wisdom can accomplish it, a discipline of consequences. The State estab-

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lishes and supports the school, and in return the school should train up good citizens. Its discipline therefore should be in accord with that of the State.

God rules the universe, and as far as we can see He rules by laws to which are attached as sanctions rewards and punishments. It is much to be a good citizen living in harmony with the laws of one's country ; it is infinitely more to be a man living in harmony with the laws God Himself has stamped upon the creation. The school like the family should prepare for both, and a great step in this direction is taken when children are accustomed to a kind, considerate, but rigid discipline of consequences.

4. *The discipline of conscience.* From the discipline of consequences some steps higher

bring us to the discipline of conscience. A school may be kept in order and made to work by a discipline of force ; the same result with infinitely more satisfaction may be accomplished by management, a discipline of tact ; not less effective in the same way and much more fruitful in moral results is a discipline of consequences wisely administered ; but none of these methods of governing and training the young touch directly the moral nature, or go far towards promoting moral growth.

A child may be forced to do right, may be managed into doing right, or may do right in view of the consequences of wrong-doing, and still the fountains of his moral nature, from which issue all that affects his higher life, remain uncleansed, unsweetened, a stag-

nant pool ready to sicken and destroy with its poisonous waters.

Conscience is the light God has placed in every human breast to enable us to know right from wrong—a monitor that gives us peace and joy when we have done our duty, and fills us with sorrow and remorse when we have come short of its requirements. Or, in the language of another, “Of the infinite counsels of the Eternal was conscience begotten. The law of conscience founded on the Deity is immutable, and like God himself eternal. What is right to-day ever was and ever will be right; and what is wrong to-day ever was and ever will be wrong.”

But the gift as it comes from the Divine hand is only a germ that requires quickening, culture, enlightenment; and the world

has no task so delicate and difficult as that of directing its growth. All other education is introductory and may be carried on with comparatively moderate skill—this requires the hand of the master. Rightly conducted at home, in the school, by the church and the State, the land would be freed from misery and crime, and the lost image of his Maker, after which he was created, would be restored to man.

The discipline of the conscience is the culmination, the fruitage of all kinds of school discipline. Indeed, it is the ultimate end of the school itself and the school life. The boy who receives punishment in school must be made better by it, or the punishment is misapplied if not immoral. The mere suppression of the bad through fear

should have as an end no place in school government. The teacher who studies to remove temptation to wrong-doing from the school-room, to win his pupils to right ways by nice management, to make the whole environment of the school as favorable as possible to the purposes of education, must keep in view as the crowning object of his work the awakening and strengthening of the conscience.

So, too, the great lessons to be learned from a discipline of rewards and punishments, the discipline of consequences, is one that concerns the eternal principles of right and wrong. A reward in school as in nature should be the sign and seal and measure of right-doing, and in like manner a punishment should be the sign and seal and measure

of wrong-doing. The effect of the whole should be to lift up to a higher plane of life.

The centre and soul of the work of every properly conducted school is the discipline of conscience. This is the pole to which every needle should point—this is the *El Dorado* towards which all efforts and all hopes should be directed. The teacher who knows how to touch and quicken the conscience of the young is a master of the educational art, for in this is involved all else in the line of his profession.

The teacher who would make conscience the guiding principle of school work must enthrone it as the sole arbiter and judge of all conduct. The straight line that runs between right and wrong must be clearly marked, and he who loses sight of it must be

made to feel the rebuke that comes from a voice within his own bosom.

As educators of the young, we err profoundly in not appealing more constantly, but always reverently, to that inner light which was given by God Himself to every human being wherewith to direct his life. We throw overboard our compass and expect to find our way. We break the rudder of our ship and vainly think we can continue our voyage in safety. We refuse to recognize God's finger-board in the soul or shut our eyes to its directions, and thereby become blind leaders of the blind.

We have much to do with the intellects of the children committed to our charge; we make some attempts to direct their feelings; but unable to touch the conscience with our

unskilful methods, or wholly ignoring this deeply hidden but most important element of our nature, we are apt to leave them helpless to resist the temptations that beset their pathway, and fill the world with men and women, learned it may be, but without that clear sense of duty which guards the soul from danger, and is necessary to make life truly successful.

That a child may be trained to love virtue and hate vice, no one acquainted with child-nature can doubt. This kind of training, indeed, is the great object of the school. The school is the agent the State uses to make good citizens. But all moral training is mechanical—mere shallow formalism—unless based upon or springing out of an enlightened conscience.

The discipline of conscience, conscience-culture, is the most difficult part of the teacher's art. To conduct the process wisely requires the most profound knowledge of human nature and the rarest skill in using it for the purpose. Where hundreds succeed in other departments of education, only one succeeds in this; for be it well understood, no clumsy hand can touch for good the conscience of a child. It draws back instinctively within itself at the approach of the ungente, the unsympathetic, or the impure.

Almost anybody may teach a child how to read, how to write, how to keep accounts; but it requires skill of a much higher order to train him morally in the way he should go; and such training is simply impossible to the rude, the selfish, the immoral. The con-

science is the centre of the whole moral life, deeply seated, carefully guarded, highly sensitive, shrinking away at the touch of the profane, the very holy of holies of the soul ; and none but a divinely anointed High Priest can enter within its precincts or minister at its altars. An appeal to the conscience of the child must be made through the conscience of the teacher. This is the only language which it understands, the only voice to which it will respond.

Moral precepts have some place in the discipline of the conscience, but only a subordinate one. They may not reach their mark. They may lie cold in the intellect without moving the feelings or taking deep root in the heart. It is even quite possible for a complete system of ethics, like a complete sys-

tem of mathematics, to exist as a content of the understanding and the reason, and the conscience remain a Sahara, dry and fruitless.

It is examples of virtuous conduct, living acts of right and wrong, that touch the conscience and quicken its life. Nothing stirs the moral nature of the young like the story of men who have upheld the truth, defended the weak, relieved misery and distress, led lives of integrity amid temptation, sacrificed themselves for their country or the common good, suffered death rather than dishonor, or become martyrs to the cause of truth.

Let our children go with Florence Nightingale as she ministers to the sick and wounded soldiers ; follow John Howard on his errands to dismal dungeons that he may

bring a ray of light to the darkened souls of hardened criminals ; listen to the brave words of Luther as he faces death before the Imperial Diet at Worms, “ Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise, God help me ; ” or hear the Revolutionary patriot, Joseph Reed, spurn with indignation the proffered bribe — “ Poor as I am, Great Britain has not money enough to buy me, ” — and their hearts will begin to feel a thrill of moral heroism, and resolves will be made to act a manly, noble part in life. Biography and history may be so taught as to keep the hearts of the learners ever turned upward, and the story of the man of sorrows speaks as nothing else can to the conscience of the whole world.

The statement must now be made more

emphatic that none but a conscientious teacher can administer in a school-room a discipline of conscience. As well might the dead undertake to arouse the dead. No pretence will answer, words will not deceive, hypocrisy will soon be detected ; a teacher must love the right and hate the wrong, must have the courage to do right and avoid doing wrong, if he expects to make any progress in the moral training of children. No degree of scholarship, no skill in teaching, no tact in management, will suffice so to perfect the character of a child by quickening his sense of right and wrong, that it will permeate and control his life.

For this the teacher needs intrinsic worth, pure as gold. There is a shallow morality, a morality of custom, a morality of form,

that may come from a source less pure ; but this is not the morality of which we speak ; a morality that does right because it is right, because it is in accordance with God's will and Word and the voice He has implanted in our souls.

The teacher's example, his daily walk and conversation, has a powerful influence upon the young of whom he has the care. We all grow like our ideals. The ideal of a child is the teacher he loves. On his soul is stamped the teacher's image, and the impression deepens day by day. Silently, unconsciously to either party, the teacher's life settles down upon the child's life and moulds it in its own likeness. Without a spoken word, the example of the true teacher is a continuous sermon, sinking into the young

hearts about him and working marvellous results in forming character and shaping life.

The great teachers of the world have not been its famous scholars, but those who by example, by word and deed, were able to influence for good the young of whom they had charge—those at whose magic touch all that is best in human nature is evolved and made ready to serve mankind and to honor God.

What rare men were Socrates, Comenius, Pestalozzi, Froebel ! Dr. Arnold has done far more for England than Wellington ; France could better afford to blot out the history of Napoleon than to lose sight of the work of Fenelon ; Germany owes its greatness more to Stein and his schools than to

Bismarck and his wars and intrigues ; and here at home Horace Mann, the schoolmaster, has left an influence that will long outlast that of Daniel Webster, the statesman.

No excuse need be offered for dwelling at this length upon the character and results of the discipline of conscience as applied in the school-room. The times demand better moral training. Our schools have improved in order and in methods of teaching ; but it is a question whether the great art of forming character in school has advanced to-day much beyond the point attained in years long by-gone.

Is there not danger that in the working of our huge school systems and our vast school machinery, we are overlooking that individual training which alone can develop the

moral nature? Grades and classes may be advantageous for intellectual instruction, but do they not crush the heart with forms rather than quicken it with life? Is not the individuality of the conscience so marked, its structure so delicate, that its tender chords can be struck only by the fingers of love in the quiet communion of teacher and pupil? But whatever the cause of the neglect, the times demand more effective moral training in our schools.

Conscience is sadly wanting in these days in the marts of trade, in store and shop and office. Too few of our mechanics when left to themselves do an honest job for a fair price. Elements of shoddy are apt to be found in the clothes we wear, the houses we build, the furniture we use to make ourselves

comfortable. The salesmen in our mercantile establishments are sometimes tempted and sometimes instructed to misrepresent the goods they handle. Sugars, teas, coffees, spices, are seldom exactly what one pays for. Wines and drugs are systematically adulterated, and deception grows rich by the manufacture and sale of spurious jewelry and articles made to counterfeit gold and silver.

The man who is your professing Christian brother and worships with you at church on Sunday, on Monday morning will cheat you in his store, shop or office, without the twinge of a conscience that has grown callous under what he deems the necessities of business. Neighbors try to outwit one another in buying and selling, and sharp practice in mak-

ing a bargain has come to be reckoned a merit, if not a virtue. Even the church seems to forget that Sunday morality will not answer for all the week, and that no one can be a true Christian who is not honest at all times, in every thought, and word and deed.

Then how common has become the disregard of public trusts. Every day we hear of frauds, embezzlements, and defalcations. Saving funds are robbed by their officers, banks are defrauded by their cashiers and presidents, even the money of widows and orphans is embezzled by those into whose hands trusting friends have placed it for safe keeping. Every penitentiary in the land contains numerous swindlers and defaulters, and if all who have escaped to Canada were

brought back the penitentiaries would hardly hold them.

The failure of a firm like that of Grant and Ward, in New York, reveals a degree of iniquity that is hardly human—almost devilish. What a consummate villain a man must be to sit down and coolly plan the robbery of trusting friends ! Corporations, big and little, all over the land, set traps to entice the money of the unwary, and when obtained, used it to fill the pockets of the few who have planned them for that purpose.

If the inside history of the frauds practised in constructing some of our railroads, the water issued as stock, the unearned dividends declared for purposes of deception, the modes by which the management and

their favorites grow rich while those who have in good faith invested their money in what they deemed an honest enterprise see it dissolved in worthless stocks or dishonored bonds, it would be enough to make one conclude that honor and honesty had departed from among men.

But nowhere do deception, falsehood, and fraud flourished so luxuriantly as in the domain of politics. Men who in the ordinary affairs of life scorn to do a wrong, will in a political campaign lie and cheat and defraud. The excuse is that the opposite party will do it, and they must be fought with their own weapons. That must be a dull conscience that finds a reason for wrongdoing in the wrong-doing of another. Is a lie any less wicked on election day than at any

other time ? Is fraud made right because it secures the election of a political friend, or the triumph of the party to which we belong ?

It is lamentable to what extent our elections have become a matter of money. At every general election votes are bought by tens of thousands. Not long since one of the shrewdest politicians in this country, a man who had served as chairman of the central committee of his party in one of the great States of the American Union, told me that on an average there are ten votes in every election district throughout the country that can be bought for less than three dollars apiece. This awful fact would seem to indicate that our whole system of government is rotting at the core.

And yet these corruptible voters have attended our public schools, have for the most part learned to read, write, and keep accounts in them ; but how terribly neglected has been their moral nature, leaving dead in their bosoms all love of country, all sense of honor, all the high obligations that grow out of a quickened conscience !

Thank God there is a brighter side to the picture I have drawn. The dark side has been shown for the purpose of calling attention in time to the great necessity of better moral education for the youth of the nation. The Republic is not yet lost. Free institutions have not yet been overthrown. The diseases that afflict our social and political condition have not yet reached the vital parts

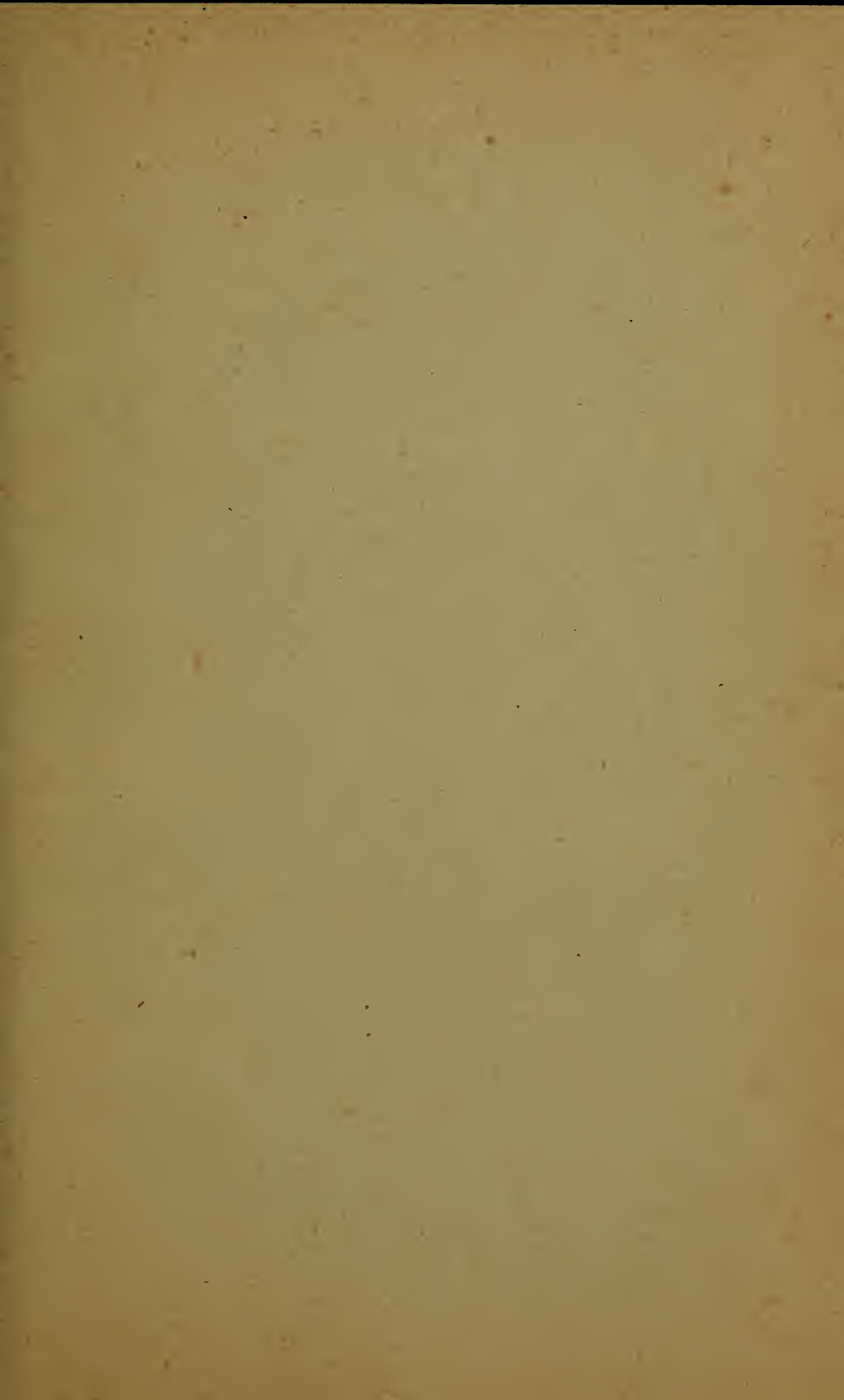
of the body politic. There is still hope for the suffering patient, and my mission here is to press you most earnestly to make the discipline of your schools a discipline of conscience, in order that the rising generation may be so trained that they will become upright citizens and honest men.

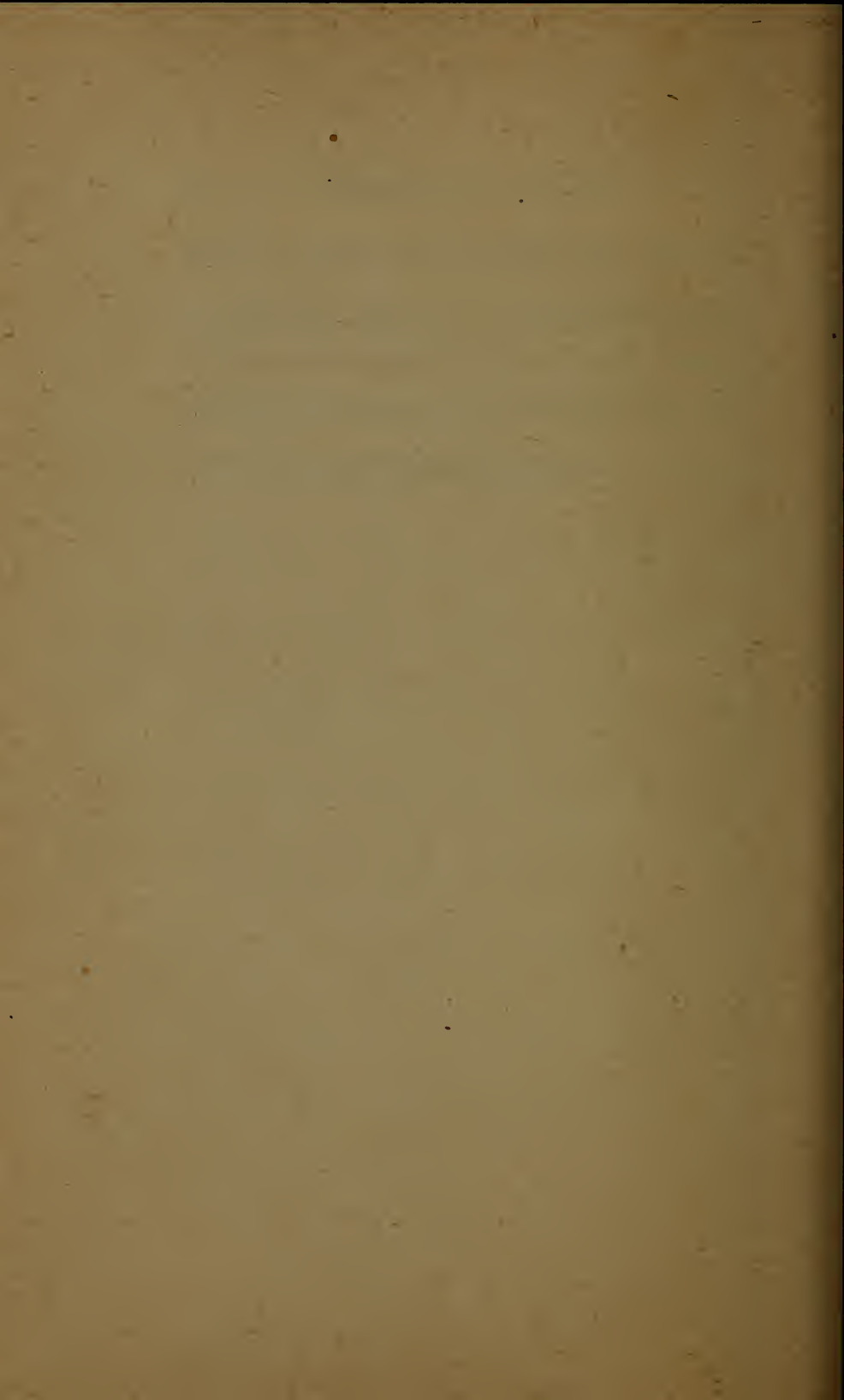
Remember that the chief function of the American public school is not to make scholars, but to send forth men and women who will be useful to society, and in whose hands the free institutions established by our fathers may be forever safe. Where all vote, where all participate in the affairs of the government, where every hand is on the helm of the ship of state, universal education becomes imperative, with conscience as

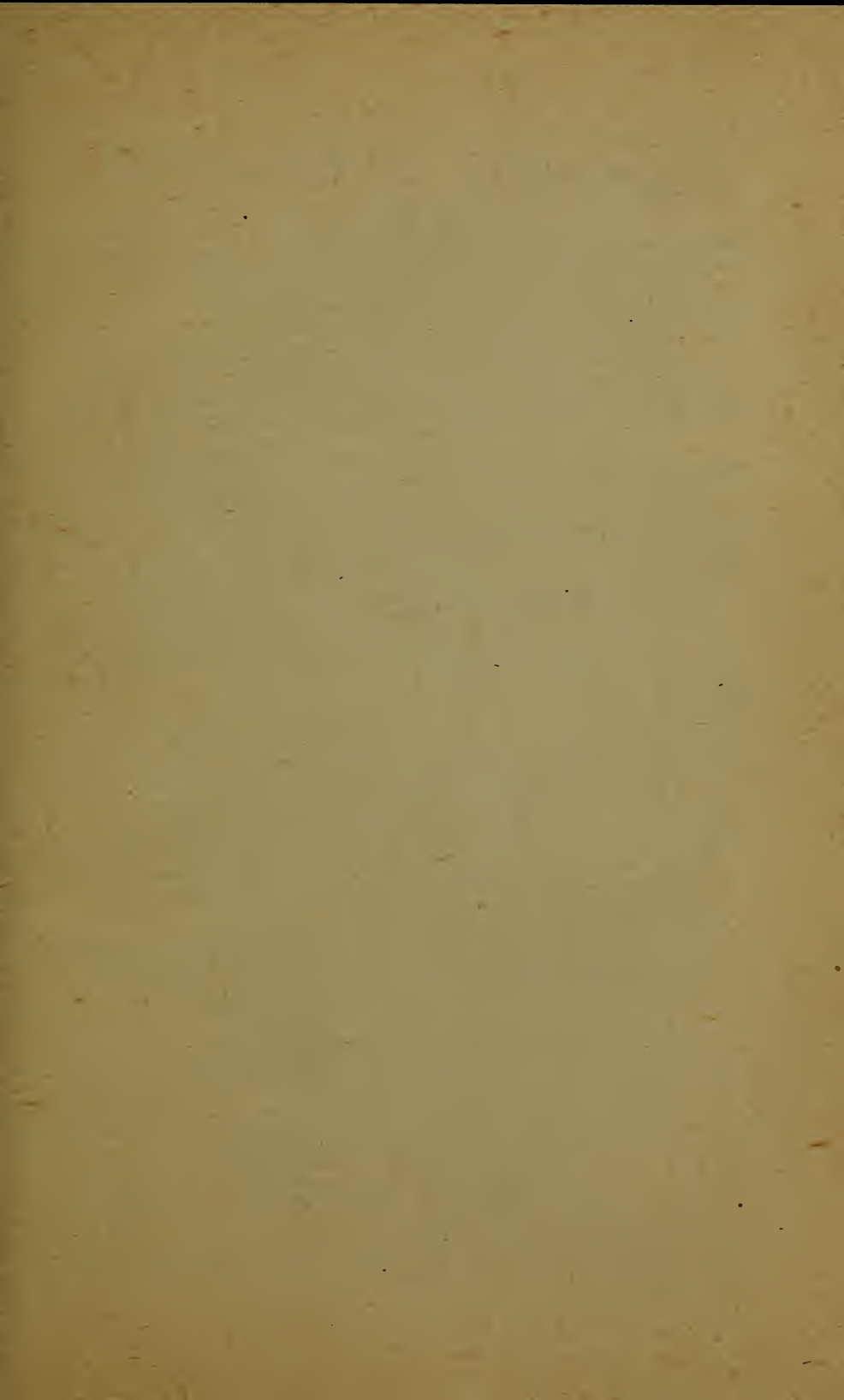
a central principle and a guiding light.

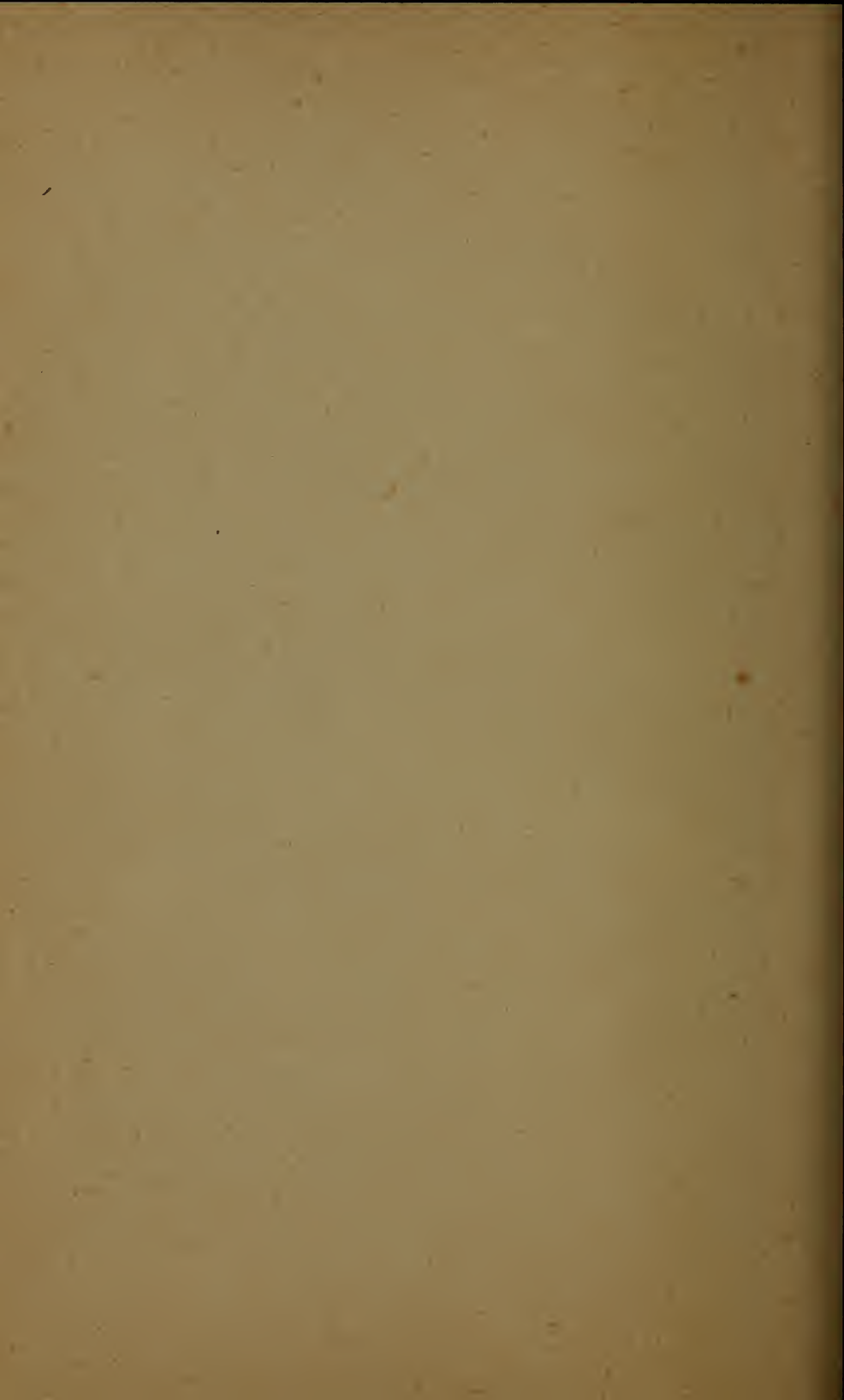
That accomplished Englishman, Archdeacon Farrar, in his "Farewell Thoughts to Americans", spoken in Philadelphia a few months ago, said : "America is God's destined heritage, not for tyranny, not for privilege, not for aristocracy, but for the schoolmaster." And I add, not for the schoolmaster as an accomplished scholar or as a skilful instructor, but as a man full-grown morally as well as intellectually, a man whose life is a concrete Gospel, a living system of ethics, whose eye can reach deep down into the hearts of the young committed to his care ; and if he should find, as he will, at least a spark of good in the most unpromising child in them, whose skill can fan it to a

flame, and who can so teach that the conscience will come to be recognized as God's highest and best gift to the children of men, and that to deaden it or to violate its dictates is to commit eternal suicide.









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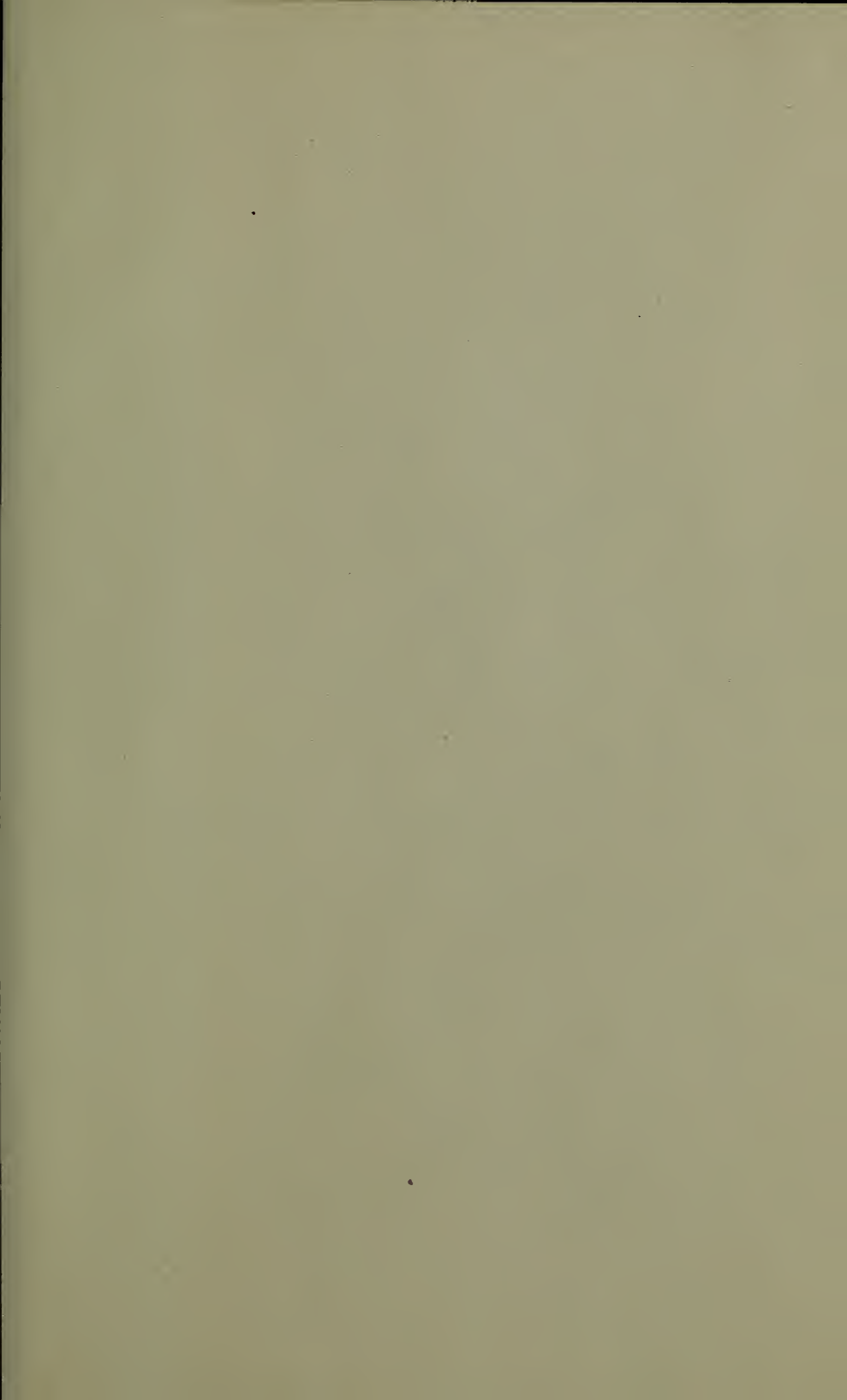
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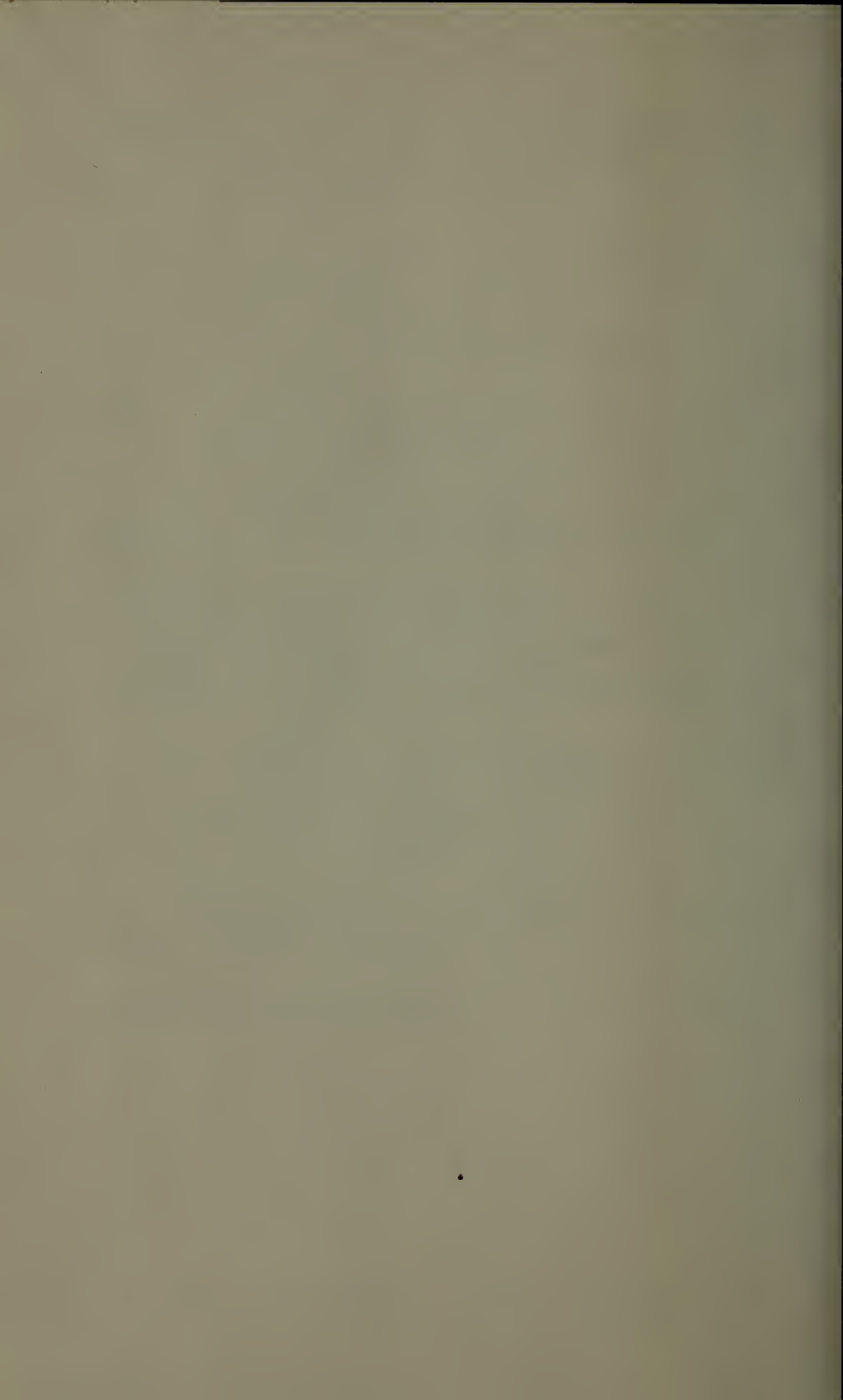
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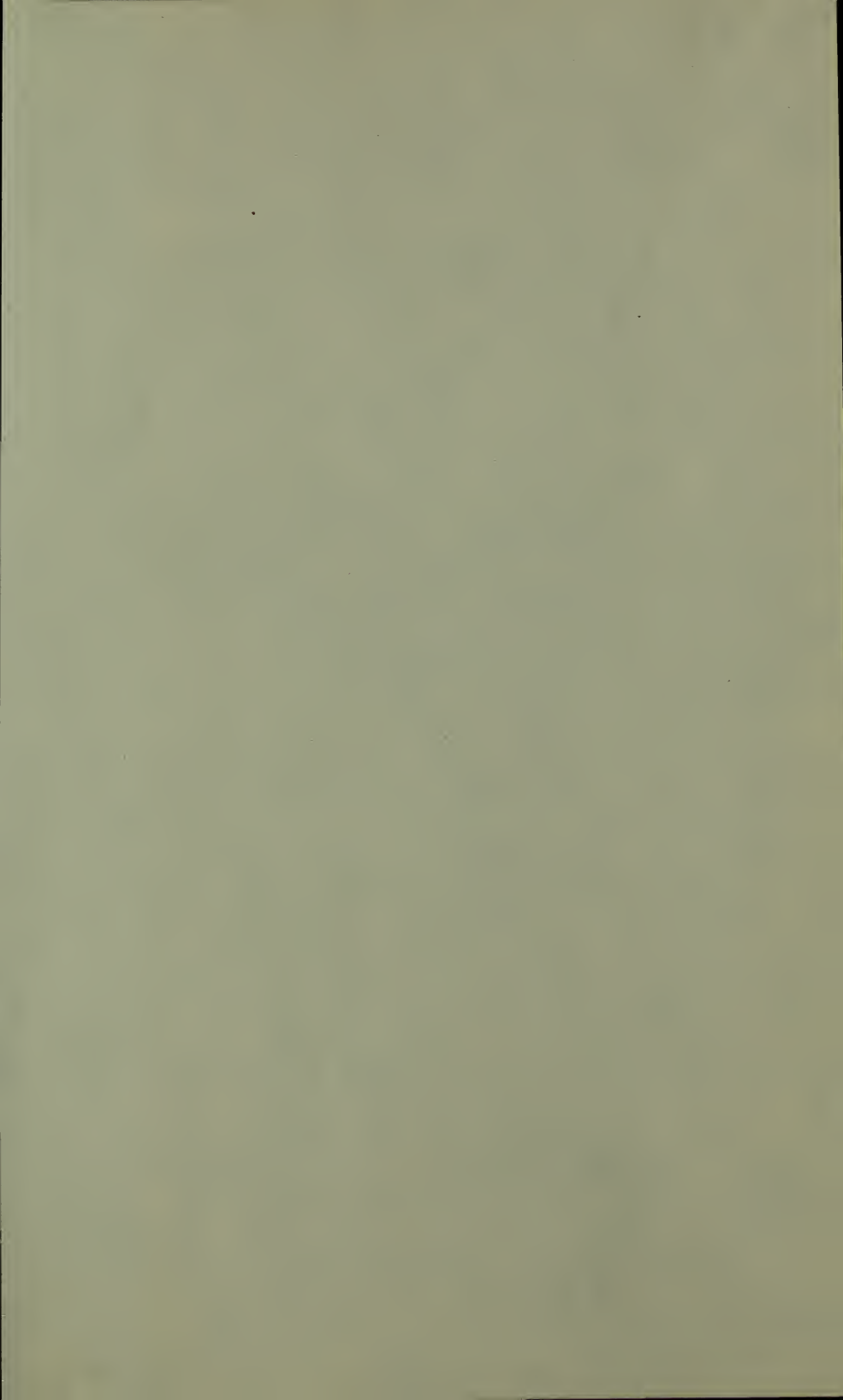
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